



George H. Ryan, Governor • Joe Hampton, Director

**Division of Natural Resources**

State Fairgrounds • P.O. Box 19281 • Springfield, IL 62794-9281 • 217/785-4233 • Voice/TDD 217/785-2427 • Fax 217/524-4882

September 13, 2001

Mr. Victor A. Modeer, Jr., P.E.  
Illinois Department of Transportation  
Division of Highways/District 6  
126 East Ash Street  
Springfield, IL 62704-4792

REC'D DIST. 6  
SEP 18 2001  
STUDIES & PLANS

Re: U.S 67 (FAP 310)  
Jacksonville to Macomb  
Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Mr. Modeer:

The Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDA) has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) that was prepared for the proposed improvement of U.S. 67 between Jacksonville and Macomb from a 2-lane facility to a 4-lane partial access controlled, divided expressway. Our review was completed to determine the project's compliance with IDOT's Agricultural Land Preservation Policy and with the state's Farmland Preservation Act (505 ILCS 75/1 et seq.).

The proposed improvement includes a common segment from Beardstown to Macomb. Two alternatives are proposed between Jacksonville and Beardstown. Alternative A begins at the Jacksonville Bypass and follows existing U.S. 67 to just east of the Arenzville-Concord Road, where it extends north-northwest on new alignment to Beardstown. Alternative E generally follows existing U.S. 67 from the Jacksonville Bypass to Beardstown.

The agricultural impacts of both Alternatives (including the common segment) are similar. More Prime and Important farmland would be converted on Alternative A, but more secondary agricultural impacts will occur if Alternative E is constructed. Alternative A requires the acquisition of 1,873 acres of all types of land (including 1,255 acres of Prime farmland and 437 acres of Important farmland). Alternative E requires the acquisition of 1,722 acres of all types of land (including 1,174 acres Prime farmland and 423 acres of Important farmland). Alternative A has fewer affected farms, Centennial farms, landlocked parcels, and displacements. Alternative E has fewer severed farms and adverse travel.

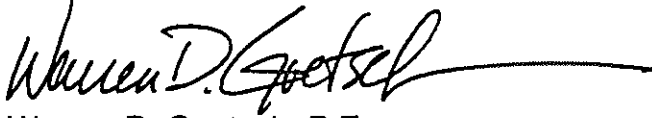
Because the agricultural impacts of both Alternatives are similar and because the IDOT is seeking to minimize the project's agricultural impacts, the IDA would consider either Alternative as being in compliance with the IDOT's Agricultural Land Preservation Policy

Mr. Modeer  
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and with the state's Farmland Preservation Act.

Should you have questions regarding our review of the DEIS or our comments contained herein, please call Jim Hartwig of my staff at 217-785-4470.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Warren D. Goetsch", followed by a long horizontal flourish line.

Warren D. Goetsch, P.E.  
Division Manager, Natural Resources

WG:JH

cc: Director Joe Hampton, IDA  
Joan Messina, IDA  
Mike Williams, IDA  
John Cross, IDA  
John Herath, IDA  
Steven Frank, IDA  
Kevin Rund, IFB  
Glenn Hardy, Morgan County SWCD  
Glenda Cox, Cass County SWCD  
Larry Shelts, Schuyler County SWCD  
Duane Mansir, McDonough County SWCD

## **Illinois Department of Agriculture**

The Illinois Department of Agriculture did not submit comments requiring response or resolution.



IN REPLY REFER TO:

# United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance  
Custom House, Room 244  
200 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106-2904

September 19, 2001

ER 01/731

Mr. Norman Stoner, P.E.  
Division Administrator  
Federal Highway Administration  
3250 Executive Park Drive  
Springfield, Illinois 62703

REC'D DIST. 6  
SEP 24 2001  
STUDIES & PLANS

Dear Mr. Stoner:

As requested, the Department of the Interior (Department) has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for US-67 (FAP-310) Expressway from Jacksonville to Macomb in Morgan, Cass, Schuyler, and McDonough Counties, Illinois, prepared by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). We offer the following comments and recommendations for your consideration.

## Section 4(f) Comments

Section 4.7 of the DEIS identifies four structures that may be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The DEIS notes that none of these properties would be directly affected by the selected alignment. The DEIS also indicates that numerous archaeological sites were found which may be eligible for the NRHP. These sites will require subsurface evaluation should they be impacted by the final highway alignment. We understand that once detailed construction plans are prepared for highway sections near each of these properties, the Illinois State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) will have the opportunity to review the plans to determine whether the project will have any effects on the structures and/or archeological sites. If further investigation determines that either the structures or archeological sites are eligible for the NRHP and that they will be impacted by the highway alignment, a Section 4(f) Evaluation may need to be prepared. Please continue to consult with the SHPO and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation on this matter.

## Environmental Impact Statement

The DEIS provides detailed analysis of two alternative alignments for constructing a 4-lane, partial access-controlled, divided expressway approximately 56 miles in length. The document adequately describes the fish and wildlife resources in the project area and the potential impacts of the alternative alignments on these resources. Alternative E would have less adverse impact to

## **U.S. Department of the Interior—Office of the Secretary**

Comment 1: Section 4.7 of the Draft EIS addresses potential historic and archaeological sites that may be eligible for the NRHP and may be impacted. Continue to work with the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency during preparation of detailed construction plans to determine whether any of these sites will be impacted. Section 4(f) Evaluation may need to be prepared if any sites or structures are impacted.

Response 1: Your comments are noted. It has been determined that historic properties potentially eligible for the National Register would not be directly affected by Alternative E. It has also been determined that no archaeological sites associated with Native American tribes were found within the project corridor. Additionally, cemeteries would be avoided by Alternative E. It is recognized that as the project moves into the design phase that some adjustments in alignment could potentially affect archaeological and historic properties. If these properties are encountered, further historic and archaeological consultation and investigation would be done in the next steps of the project. Additionally, if the site(s) are determined to have national significance, a 4(f) evaluation will be performed.

Mr. Norman Stoner, P.E.

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environmentally sensitive areas than would Alternative A. The DEIS does not indicate a Preferred Alternative.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), along with a number of other agencies, have been cooperating agencies in review of the proposed project and preparation of the DEIS. The Service has received a copy of the September 10, 2001, letter from the IDNR to Mr. Modeer, District Engineer for the IDOT. The IDNR recommends that Alternative E be pursued as the selected alternative alignment and provides further recommendations for avoiding, minimizing, and offsetting environmental impacts. We support the IDNR recommendations set forth in their September 10, 2001, letter.

2

Impacts on Beardstown Marsh Natural Area: There appears to be a discrepancy in the DEIS concerning direct project impacts to the Beardstown Marsh Natural Area. On page 4-37, the DEIS indicates that the area would not be directly impacted. However, on page 4-49, section 4.3.5.4 indicates that about 0.21 acres would be directly impacted. This discrepancy should be corrected in the Final EIS.

3

Endangered Species Act

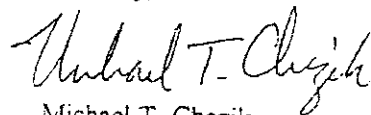
Section 4.3.5.3 (page 4-46) of the DEIS indicates that a large population of the federal and Illinois threatened decurrent false aster (*Boltonia decurrens*) would be partially impacted by a project segment common to both alternative build alignments being considered. Section 5.4 (page 5-3) of the DEIS indicates that a biological assessment is being prepared to address impacts to both federal and state listed species and will be distributed to the Service and IDNR. We recommend that, if possible, the Record of Decision (ROD) not be finalized and signed until the consultation with the Service is completed and the results of that consultation can be incorporated into the ROD.

4

The Department has a continuing interest in working with the FHWA and the IDOT to ensure that project impacts to resources of concern to the Department are adequately addressed. For continued coordination related to fish and wildlife resources, as well as threatened and endangered species, please contact the Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Rock Island Field Office, 4469 48th Avenue Court, Rock Island, Illinois, 61201-9213, Telephone: (309) 793-5800, Fax: (309) 793-5804.

We appreciate the opportunity to review the document and provide comments.

Sincerely,



Michael T. Chezik  
Regional Environmental Officer

## **U.S. Department of the Interior—Office of the Secretary**

Comment 2: We support IDNR's recommendation that Alternative E be selected as the preferred alignment.

Response 2: We note your support for selection of Alternative E as the preferred alignment. IDOT selected Alternative E as the preferred alignment, as indicated in this Final EIS.

Comment 3: There is a discrepancy in the Draft EIS concerning impacts to the Beardstown Marsh Natural Area; Section 4.3.5.4 states .08 hectares (0.21 acres) would be directly impacted; Section 4.3.3.2 states that none of the Natural Area would be directly impacted.

Response 3: The Final EIS has been corrected to indicate in Section 4.3.3.2 that the Beardstown Marsh Illinois Natural Area (INAI site) is impacted.

Comment 4: The Record of Decision (ROD) should not be finalized and signed until consultation is completed on the Biological Assessment (BA).

Response 4: The Biological Assessment has been completed and has been forwarded to the appropriate agencies for review. The Record of Decision for the Final EIS will not be signed until the Biological Assessment consultation has been completed.



# Illinois Department of Transportation

Division of Aeronautics

1 Langhorne Bond Drive / Springfield, Illinois / 62707-8415

August 9, 2001

Mr. Larry Martin  
CH2Mhill  
8501 West Higgins road  
Suite 300  
Chicago, Illinois 60631-2801

Re: U.S. 67 (FAP310) DEIS

Dear Mr. Martin:

The Division has reviewed the above referenced document and has determined it to be consistent with our statewide plans and programs for the aviation system.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the document.

Respectfully yours,

James V. Bildilli,  
Chief Engineer



## **Illinois Department of Transportation, Division of Aeronautics**

The Illinois Department of Transportation, Division of Aeronautics did not submit comments requiring response or resolution.



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION 5  
77 WEST JACKSON BOULEVARD  
CHICAGO, IL 60604-3590

SEP 17 2001

REPLY TO THE ATTENTION OF

B-19J  
**REC'D DIST. 6**

SEP 19 2001  
**STUDIES & PLANS**

Norman Stoner, P.E.  
Division Administrator  
Federal Highway Administration  
3250 Executive Drive  
Springfield, Illinois 62703

Re: Comments on the DEIS for U.S. Route 67, Between Jacksonville and Macomb, Illinois - EIS  
No. 010262

Dear Mr. Stoner:

In accordance with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (U.S. EPA's) responsibilities under both the National Environmental Policy Act and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act, we have reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the proposal to provide additional highway capacity on U.S. Route 67 from Jacksonville to Macomb, Illinois. The stated needs for the project are: transportation continuity and improved economic stability, rural access, travel efficiency and economic development.

The DEIS evaluates a single alignment alternative from the Jacksonville bypass to a point east of Chapin, two different alignment alternatives from a point east of Chapin to a point south of Beardstown, and a single alignment alternative from a point south of Beardstown, to a point east of Macomb. The two different alignment alternatives between a point east of Chapin and a point south of Beardstown are called Alternative A and Alternative E. Generally, Alternative E's alignment follows the alignment of the existing U.S. Route 67, while Alternative A's alignment would be a new alignment. The single alignment, which extends from a point south of Beardstown, to a point east of Macomb, generally follows the alignment of the existing U.S. Route 67; it also includes bypasses at Rushville and Industry. The DEIS does not include a preferred alternative. We have the following comments about the DEIS.

We are concerned about how the purpose and need are justified. The DEIS states that, by the design year for U.S. Route 67, the traffic volume on portions of the roadway will exceed (1) IDOT's travel criterion of a maximum of 800 vehicles per hour on a two-lane rural highway, and (2) the maximum service volume for LOS C, the operational criterion for this type of highway. However, the DEIS does not describe which portions of U.S. Route 67 will exceed these criteria. If minor portions of the roadway will exceed these criteria by the design year, then it would not be necessary to implement a solution throughout the entire project area. The DEIS should specify which portions of U.S. Route 67 will exceed the operational criteria at the design year.